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GA
APPLYING FOR
GENERAL
ASSISTANCE



Illinois Department
of Public Aid

Gregory L. Coler, Director

APPLYING FOR GENERAL ASSISTANCE

Individuals and families who are in need of assistance, but who do not qualify for the Department's AFDC or AABD programs may receive financial assistance, including the cost of necessary medical care and funeral and burial expenses, through the General Assistance Program.

All non-exempt income available to the applicant for General Assistance, or GA, must be less than the appropriate General Assistance Payment level.

WHO MAY APPLY FOR GA?

Local offices accept applications for GA from any person whose residence is in the City of Chicago.

HOW DO I APPLY?

FIRST, complete an application. Your name, address and signature must be included. You may take the application home and receive help in completing it from friends and relatives or you may ask and receive help at the office. An individual may make an application for another person under certain circumstances. Applications may be made at home for those persons physically unable to come to the local office.

SECOND, you will have an "intake interview". This will be as soon as possible, but no later than 14 days after the date the application was filed with the proper local office.

You must provide the local office with a mailing ADDRESS. You can verify this by bringing papers such as rent receipts, utility bills, employment records, driver's license, voter's registration cards and other papers. Changes in address need to be reported to the local office (and the Project Chance Office).

HOW IS ELIGIBILITY DETERMINED?

The local office will need certain information to determine whether or not you are eligible for the GA program. If necessary, local office staff will help you get the necessary information.

If you are determined eligible, the local office will periodically check to determine whether you continue to be eligible for GA.

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS?

- You must **not** be eligible for any of the Department of Public Aid's "categorical assistance programs" such as AFDC, AABD.
- You must show proof of your citizenship or legal alien status if born outside of the United States. You can show your citizenship if foreign born in many ways: including U.S. Passport, Certificate of Citizenship, U.S. Citizen Resident's Card, Naturalization Certificate... Refugees or parolees who have lived in the U.S. more than 18 months may be eligible for assistance and those refugees and parolees who have lived in the U.S. more than 36 months may be eligible as any other GA case.
- You must be living in Illinois with intent to remain.
- You will be requested to furnish a Social Security Number.
- You must provide the local office with a mailing address. Your address does not have to be verified if you do not currently have a place to live.
- If you are employable, registration for employment and cooperation with Project Chance are conditions of your eligibility.

The following assets are not considered when determining your eligibility for GA: Homestead property, one motor vehicle if the equity value is not over \$1500, household furnishings, clothing or personal effects. The value of a motor vehicle(s) and ownership of homestead property need to be verified.

WHAT ARE THE CLIENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS?

You Must Report Changes

It is the responsibility of the client to report all changes in circumstances - household composition, change of address, receipt of income or assets, extent of income maintenance needs, which might affect eligibility for assistance within 5 work days.

You Must Seek Employment or Accept Employment

All persons applying for GA, if not exempt from work registration requirements, are required to participate in the Department's employment program, Project Chance. If you are determined eligible, a letter will be sent to you telling how and when you will begin participation. Cooperation with Project Chance is a condition of eligibility for GA. (See the Project Chance Brochure.)

The Medical Assistance Program

All GA recipients are eligible for medical care under the GA Medical Assistance Program.

Food Stamps

Most persons receiving GA are eligible to receive food stamps which are directly redeemable for food products. The amount of food stamps varies according to household composition.

Civil Rights

On the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religious beliefs, handicap or political affiliations, the Department of Public Aid may not 1) deny any individual care, aid, or other benefits provided under the public assistance programs; 2) differentiate in the extent and manner in which these benefits are provided; 3) subject an individual to segregation or separate treatment in determining eligibility or other requirements to qualify for benefits; or 4) deny or offer anyone an opportunity different from that offered others, including the opportunity to participate in education, training and employment-training programs.

No direct payment for goods and services

provided may be made by the Department to any agency, institution, organization or individual vendor which engages in discriminatory practices.

Persons with complaints concerning alleged discriminatory conditions or practices by the Department of Public Aid or other agencies, institutions, organizations or individuals providing care or services to an individual relative to his status as a public aid recipient may do so in writing to the Illinois Department of Public Aid, Jesse B. Harris Bldg., 100 S. Grand Ave., E., Springfield, Illinois 62762 or to the Office of Civil Rights, 300 South Wacker, 8th Floor, Chicago, Illinois 60606. The complaint may be sent in a letter, or written on a form (DPA 185, Complaint Concerning Alleged Discrimination), which can be obtained from the local office.

The Department will investigate all complaints promptly and take corrective action when warranted. The Director of the Department will review the action taken, and the complainant will be informed in writing of the disposition of the complaint.

Additional Information

Current copies of the General Assistance Manual are maintained in each regional and local office where they are available during regular working hours for inspection. Information about the Project Chance Program is available in the informational pamphlet (DPA 2402).

Fraud

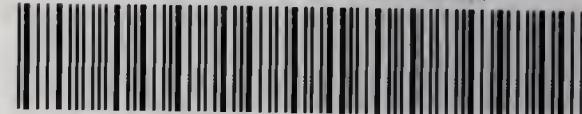
Under Illinois law, persons who make false statements or who willfully deceive and misrepresent their circumstances to the Department or persons who willfully fail to report changes in income, property or need which affect the amount of assistance they are entitled to are subject to penalties.

Persons found guilty of fraud will be required to repay the state the amount of assistance received and, in addition, may be fined, imprisoned or both. Anyone who helps or encourages misrepresentation of a case by any means is, by law, also guilty of fraud.

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Public Registers

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Local offices are required by law to keep registers in the offices showing the names, addresses and amounts of assistance received by recipients of GA. All other information obtained by local offices about applicants and recipients is strictly confidential. The registers may not be used for commercial, personal or political purposes. Any violation of this rule is punishable by a fine, imprisonment or both.

Persons requesting to see the registers will be asked to complete Department request forms.

HOW WILL I BE NOTIFIED?

Your application for GA will be given prompt attention. You will receive a written notice of whether your application has been approved or denied.

If your assistance is reduced, suspended or terminated, a notice will be mailed to you at least 10 calendar days before the expected date of receipt of the change or termination in assistance.

CAN I APPEAL?

An applicant for or recipient of General Assistance has the right to appeal. You must notify the Department in writing of the intent to appeal.

You or your authorized representative must exercise the right to appeal within 60 calendar days after the decision of the local office. Further information is available in the Department's information pamphlet, Form DPA 377.

The Illinois Department of Public Aid does not discriminate in admission to or treatment or employment in programs or activities in compliance with the Illinois Human Right Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, and the U.S. Constitution.

**Illinois Department of Public Aid
Jesse B. Harris Building
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